773 According to tradition, he had beside him a toabga (a kind of
535 magic axe) and a tibo (a sacred object, fetish).
776 The people captured him and put him in a safe place. But of what possible use could he be to them? Nobody knew. [237] He was something unknown and fearful.

One day the people had gone off to hold the kouré (funeral observances) of an old man and were on their way back home. They were warba dancers. They were all singing as they approached the house of the waongo, who came out. The dancers were terrified and ran away. Only one of the singers had the courage to remain behind.

He went on with the songs and the waongo followed him right up to the house of the deceased, and there he began to dance.

From this it was concluded that the waongo had something to do with funerals. Since that time the waongo is summoned whenever an old man or woman of the Nioniossé (soukoaba) dies. He never dances for deceased young people.

Since the waongo or, rather, the soukou is considered to be sacred and to embody a sort of religion which possesses secrets
● [498] that should not be made known to everyone, a special language -- a deformation of the môré [Mossi] language -- has been invented. It is understood only by the initiates.

535 The waongo dances to the sound of a special tom-tom, accompanied by songs and praises in the secret language. The dance is of no special interest; it involves more or less frenetic movements, such as characterize most of the dances of the indigenous peoples.

The waongo is always accompanied by a circle of young men dressed in a narrow strip of cotton, decorated with cowries, and carrying satchels at their sides. These boys make movements with their heads which [238] are precisely like those made by circus
[534] horses. In addition to the tom-tom, flute players (wissé) accompany the dances.

535 We shall now speak of the true funeral dance, called warba.
764 It is performed by men wearing skirts, a kind of net shirt dyed blue, and headdresses made of cowrie shells. A long fringe, weighted

304 wound with warm water which often is not scrupulously clean
752 since the gourd in which it is kept is not always washed. The
[278] wound is dusted with a charred substance (made by burning the bark or leaves of the baguem-baga plant) mixed with karite butter. It is bandaged with a leaf from the kantonga bush, tied on with a bit of thread. Once the wound has begun to heal, it is wrapped in cotton strips. The water used to wash the wound is thrown into a hole that is covered with a stone.

304 Special language of the kéogo. In order to prevent the Moaga
198 (here meaning an uncircumcised person) from understanding what is said within the kéogo or between the boys and the guards, a special language has been developed. Some of its words are as follows:

Water (kom in ordinary Mossi language), hargo;
Millet cake (saghbo in Mossi), lâbo;
Sauce (zindo in Mossi), kirou;
Fire (bougoum in Mossi), nionom;
Beer (dam in Mossi), sonnom;
A robe or blanket (fougou in Mossi), pilli;
Mat (pinri in Mossi), wanghé. [268]

304 Distinctive attire of the circumcised boys (bankoanga). His
292 costume, wallimba or zougba, consists of a fringed loincloth with pockets. He carries a rough stick (zâbré) with which he hunts rabbits and other small game.

He accompanies his evening dance with an instrument called
304 wassimba, a curved stick on the end of which are strung four or
293 five pieces of gourd, roughly circular in shape, with holes bored through them.

304 Tom-toms. The bankoensé (newly circumcised boys) dance
534 to the beat of two drums like those used in the warba and waongo
535 (see the chapter on native dances). The drums are called gangango when they accompany other dances, but here they are called gallyans.

304 Prohibitions in the kéogo. A Moaga (1) is strictly forbidden

1. "Moaga" is used here in a pejorative sense and means an uncircumcised man.

304 563 852 day the one in charge of the circumcision, a wealthy Yarga or Mossi who has the means to feed several of the people to be circumcised, chooses a tree to serve as shelter for the operation. Rain need not be taken into account, for circumcision is always performed during the dry season from December to April, when agricultural work is at a standstill. The tree is surrounded with straw mats, forming the téoo [778] or sacred enclosure which no one who is not circumcised may come near without running the risk of being insulted and often beaten; if he should dare to step inside it, he would be stricken by the greatest misfortunes. The Peul sets out a flat stone, sacrifices a chicken in order to make the spirit of the tree benevolent toward those to be circumcised, and operates on the boys one by one. Drums are played throughout the operation to drown the cries of the victims.

852 For three days afterwards the newly circumcised boys do nothing. They rest and tend their wounds. They remain isolated from the rest [535] of the community for two or three months, sometimes even longer. Judging by the dances which close the festivities, dancing must be their primary concern during that period of time. They also thresh the millet of those who invite them to do so, but no uncircumcised person may join them; no uninitiated individual may come near them. [198] They do not speak the Mossi language at this time, but a special tongue of which they learn enough to serve them in their everyday needs. Woe to those who forget and use their native tongue; they are [551] beaten with switches made of a kind of willow. Even their names are changed, and no one may call them by their Mossi names.

The circumcised boys are divided in two groups, one "male" and one "female." One of the groups bears the name of the hyena (kwara in their language) and the other is called masalro, whose French equivalent we do not know. The hyena group must strain their wits to snatch food, even from the other circumcised boys, who are kept constantly on the alert. The other group makes improper gestures during the dance.

852 293 776 481 The circumcised boys are covered with gray dust to alter their appearance completely. A tail is fastened to the back of their breechcloth, hanging to the ground. It is made of plaited cotton thread and ends in a pompon. Its function is to drive off the kikirsi spirits, who apparently do not like circumcised persons. The boys walk bent over and leaning on sticks like old men. This is done to test their obedience and to see if they listen carefully to what they are told.